

THE MIDNIGHT MESSENGER;

OR, A

Sudden call from an earthly glory to the cold grave.

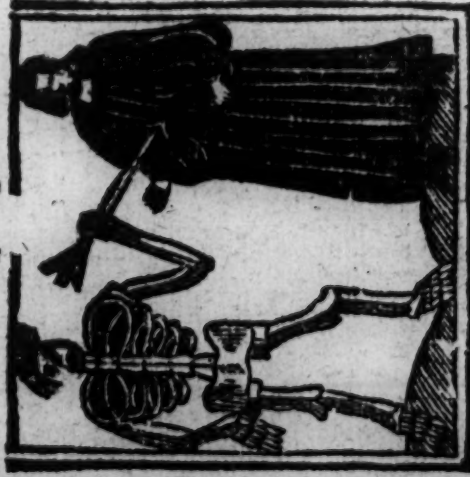
IN A DIALOGUE

Between death and a rich man; who, in the midst of all his wealth, received the tidings of his last day, to his unspeakable and sorrowful lamentation. To the tune of, *Aim not too high, &c.*

Death

The

Rich Man.



DEATH.

THOU wealthy man of large possessions here,
Amounting to some thousand pounds a year
Ertorted by oppression from the poor,
The time is come that thou shalt be no more;
Thy house therefore in order set with speed,
And call to mind how you you're life do lead:
Let true repentance be thy chiefest care.
And for another world, now, now, prepare;
For notwithstanding all thy heaps of gold,
Your lands and lofty buildings manifold,
Take notice you must die this very day,
And therefore kiss your bags and come a way.

RICH MAN.

[He started straight, and turn'd his head aside,
Where seeing pale-fac'd death, aloud he cry,
Lean famish'd slave, why do you threaten so?
Whence come you pray, and whither must I go?

DEATH.

I come from ranging round the universe,
Thro' courts and kingdoms, far and near, I pass,
Where rich and poor, distressed, bond and free,
Fall, soon or late, a sacrifice to me:
From crowned kings, to captives bound in chains,
My power reaches, Sir, the longest reigns,
That ever were, I put a period to,
And now I come in fine to conquer you.

RICH MAN,

I can't, nor won't believe that you pale death,
Was sent this day to stop my vital breath,
By reason, I in perfect health remain,
Free from diseases, sorrow, grief, and pain;
No heavy heart, nor fainting fits have I,
And do you say, that I am drawing nigh
The latter minute, sure it cannot be,
Depart therefore, you are not sent for me.

DEATH.

Yes, yes, I am, for did you never know,
The tender grass and pleasant flowers that grow
Perhaps one minute, and the next cut down,
And so is man, tho' fam'd with high renown.
Have you not heard the doleful passing bell
Ring out for those that were alive and well?
The other day, in health and pleasure too,
And had as little thoughts of death as you?
For, let me tell you, when my warrant's seal'd,
The sweetest beauty that the earth doth yield,
At my approach shall turn as pale as lead;
'Tis I that lays them on their dying-bed.
I kill with dropsy, phtisick, stone, and gout,
But when my raging fevers fly about,
I strike the man, perhaps, but over-night,
Who hardly lives to see the morning light.
I'm sent each hour, like to a nimble page,
To infants, hoary heads, and middle age.

THE MIDNIGHT MESSENGER;

OR, A

Sudden call from an earthly glory to the cold grave.

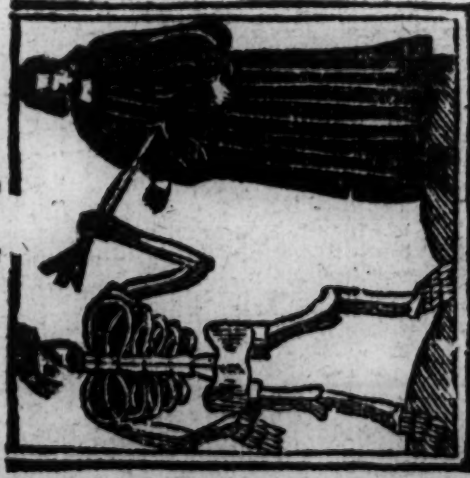
IN A DIALOGUE

Between death and a rich man; who, in the midst of all his wealth, received the tidings of his last day, to his unspeakable and sorrowful lamentation. To the tune of, *Aim not too high, &c.*

Death

The

Rich Man.



DEATH.

THOU wealthy man of large possessions here,
Amounting to some thousand pounds a year
Ertorted by oppression from the poor,
The time is come that thou shalt be no more;
Thy house therefore in order set with speed,
And call to mind how you you're life do lead:
Let true repentance be thy chiefest care.
And for another world, now, now, prepare;
For notwithstanding all thy heaps of gold,
Your lands and lofty buildings manifold,
Take notice you must die this very day,
And therefore kiss your bags and come a way.

RICH MAN.

[He started straight, and turn'd his head aside,
Where seeing pale-fac'd death, aloud he cry,
Lean famish'd slave, why do you threaten so?
Whence come you pray, and whither must I go?

DEATH.

I come from ranging round the universe,
Thro' courts and kingdoms, far and near, I pass,
Where rich and poor, distressed, bond and free,
Fall, soon or late, a sacrifice to me:
From crowned kings, to captives bound in chains,
My power reaches, Sir, the longest reigns,
That ever were, I put a period to,
And now I come in fine to conquer you.

RICH MAN,

I can't, nor won't believe that you pale death,
Was sent this day to stop my vital breath,
By reason, I in perfect health remain,
Free from diseases, sorrow, grief, and pain;
No heavy heart, nor fainting fits have I,
And do you say, that I am drawing nigh
The latter minute, sure it cannot be,
Depart therefore, you are not sent for me.

DEATH.

Yes, yes, I am, for did you never know,
The tender grass and pleasant flowers that grow
Perhaps one minute, and the next cut down,
And so is man, tho' fam'd with high renown.
Have you not heard the doleful passing bell
Ring out for those that were alive and well?
The other day, in health and pleasure too,
And had as little thoughts of death as you?
For, let me tell you, when my warrant's seal'd,
The sweetest beauty that the earth doth yield,
At my approach shall turn as pale as lead;
'Tis I that lays them on their dying-bed.
I kill with dropsy, phtisick, stone, and gout,
But when my raging fevers fly about,
I strike the man, perhaps, but over-night,
Who hardly lives to see the morning light.
I'm sent each hour, like to a nimble page,
To infants, hoary heads, and middle age.

4-83

Time after time I sweep the world quite thro':
Then its in vain to think I'll favour you.

RICH MAN.

Proud death, you see what a awful way I've hear
For when I frown, none of my servants dare
Approach my presence, but in corners hide,
Until I am pleas'd and pacify'd.
Nay, men of greater rank I keep in awe;
Nor did I ever fear the force of law,
But ever did my enemies subdue;
And must I, after all, submit to you.

DEATH.

'Tis very true, for why, thy daring soul,
Which never could endure the least controul,
I'll thrust thee from this earthly tenement,
And thou shalt to another world be sent.

RICH MAN.

What must I die, and leave a vast estate,
Which, with my gold, I purchas'd but of late,
Besides what I had many years ago?
What must my wealth and I be parted so?
If you your darts and arrows must let fly,
Go search the jails, where mourning debtors lie,
Release them from their sorrow, grief, and woe,
For I am rich and therefore loath to go.

DEATH.

I'll search no jails, but the right mark I'll hit,
And tho' you are unwilling to submit,
Yet die you must, no other friend can do;
Prepare yourself to go, I come for you.
If you had all the world, and ten times more,
Yet die you must, there's millions gone before:
The greatest kings on earth yield and obey,
And at my feet their crowns and sceptres lay.
If crowned heads and right renowned peers,
Die in the prime and blossom of their years,
Can you suppose to gain a longer space,
No, I will send you to another place.

RICH MAN.

Oh! stay thy hand, and be not so severe,
I have a hopeful son and daughter dear;
All that I beg is but to let me live,
That I may them in lawful marriage give:
They being young, when I am laid in grave,
I fear they will be wrong'd of what they have;
Altho' of me you will no pity take,
Yet spare me for my little infants sake.

DEATH.

If such a vain excuse as this might do,
It would be long e'er mortals would go thro'
The shades of death, for every man would find
Something to say, that he might stay behind:
Yet if ten thousand arguments they'd use,
The destiny of dying to excuse,
They'll find it is vain with me to strive,
For why, I part the dearest friends alive.
Poor parents die, and leave their children small,
With nothing to support them here withal.

But the kind hand of gracious providence,
Who is their father, friend, and sole defence.
Tho' I have held you in a long dispute,
Yet after all, here with a sharp salute,
I'll put a period to your days and years,
Causing your eyes to flow with dying tears.

RICH MAN.

[Then with a groan hemade this sad complaint]
My heart is dying, and my spirits faint;
To my close chamber let me be convey'd,
Farewel, false world, for thou hast me betray'd.
Would I had never wrong'd the fatherless,
Nor mourning widows, when in sad distress;
Would I had never wrong'd the fatherless,
Nor mourning widows when in sad distress;
Would I had ne'er been guilty of that sin,
Would I had never known what gold had been,
For by the same my heart was drawn away,
To search for gold, but now this very day,
I find it is but like a slender reed.
Which fails me most, when most I stand in need;
For wo is me! the time is come at last,
Now I am on a bed of sorrows cast.
Where in lamenting tears I weeping lie,
Because my sins make me afraid to die.
Oh! Death, be pleas'd to spare me yet a while.
That I to God myself may reconcile;
For true repentance some small time allow,
I never fear'd a future state till now;
My bags of gold and land I'd freely give,
For to obtain the favour here to live,
Until I have a sure foundation laid;
Let me not die before my peace be made.

DEATH.

Thou hast not many minutes here to stay,
Lift up your heart to God without delay;
Implore his pardon now for what is past,
Who knows but he may save your soul at last.

RICH MAN.

I'll water now with tears my dying bed,
Before the Lord my sad complaint I'll spread,
And if he will vouchsafe to pardon me,
To die and leave this world I could be free.
False world, false world, farewel, farewel, adieu,
I find, I find, there is no trust in you;
For when upon a dying bed we lie,
Your gilded baits are nought but misery.
My youthful son, and loving daughter dear,
Take warning by your dying father here;
Let not the world deceive you at this rate,
For fear a sad repentance comes too late.
Sweet babes, I little thought the other day,
I should so suddenly be snatch'd away.
By Death, and leave you weeping here behind,
But 'tis a most uncertain thing I find.
When in the grave my head is laid full low,
Pray let not folly prove your overthrow:
Serve ye the Lord, obey his holy will,
That he may have a blessing for you still.
[Having saluted them, he turn'd aside,
These were the very words before he dy'd.]

*A painful life I ready am to leave,
Wherefore in mercy, Lord, my soul receive.*